



Advocacy Department

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December 15, 2016

Boston City Council  
1 City Hall Square, Room 550  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Councilor,

I am writing to express Mass Audubon's support for the ordinance to reduce plastic bags that has been brought before the Boston City Council.

Mass Audubon encourages the use of reusable shopping bags as opposed to plastic or other one-time use bags to reduce solid waste and provide for overall environmental health. Over 100 billion plastic shopping bags are consumed in the US each year. Plastic bags are made of nonrenewable resources, and serve as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, and marine litter. While it is true that a portion of plastic bags are re-used or recycled, millions of these bags end up along road sides, in waterways and floating in the ocean.

These single-use bags also pose a threat to sea turtles, whales, and other marine animals that die every year from eating plastic bags they mistake for food. Because they are made from polyethylene, which is made from crude oil and natural gas, plastic bags deplete valuable and costly nonrenewable resources.

With plastic bags washing up on the shores of the most remote areas on earth, countries across the globe are taking decisive action to reduce plastic bag use. The European Union, China, Australia, Bangladesh and dozens of other countries have successfully banned or introduced a tax on disposable plastic bags. This November, California voters upheld the nation's first statewide plastic bag ban, despite significant opposition from industry.

Dozens of communities in Massachusetts have passed regulations on plastic bags, and many others are currently considering joining this list. Mass Audubon applauds the effort being made in Boston to reduce the use of single-use plastic bags and contribute to a shift away from disposable, petroleum-based products.

Sincerely,

John J. Clarke  
Director of Public Policy & Government Relations

cc: Mayor Martin Walsh, City of Boston